



MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

*36th Annual*  
ACADEMICS, ARTS & ATHLETICS



AWARD CELEBRATION

March 23, 2024

*Loews Hotel, Minneapolis*

*Excellence is the result of caring  
more than others think is wise—*

*Risking more than others  
think is safe—*

*Dreaming more than others  
think is practical—*

*Expecting more than others  
think is possible.*

# *Congratulations*

to the

## **Academics, Arts & Athletics Award Honorees**



**Jim Smokrovich, President**  
MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Welcome to the Minnesota State High School League's Academics, Arts & Athletics (Triple 'A') Award Banquet. Each year, since the debut of the Triple 'A' award in 1988, the League recognizes and honors 32 exceptional students as Triple 'A' award winners from across the State of Minnesota.*

*As we gather today with the students in this space, it is important to understand that we have more than 500 member schools that made local choices for one male and one female student to be honored as their local Triple A award winners. Today, we gather with the final 32 as recognized as by our 16 administrative regions.*

*What a remarkable group of young adults before us today! Executing, performing, competing in one activity is difficult, yet these 32 excel academically, athletically, and creatively through the arts. I am in awe of the talent before us and those recognized throughout the state as local "Triple A" award recipients. You can be very proud of yourselves and reflect upon what passion, hard work, and dedication have done for you! You represent Minnesota students today and into the future, and we thank you for that.*

*On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Minnesota State High School League, congratulations to all the students and thank you to the families. You, too, deserve to share their spotlight.*

# Program

## Welcome

Charlie Campbell  
*Associate Director, MSHSL*

## Comments

Jim Smokrovich  
*Board of Directors President, MSHSL*

## Introduction of Triple “A” Achievers

Dan Johnson  
*MSHSL Region 3AA Secretary,  
MNIAAA Executive Director*

Sandra Setter Larsen  
*Activities Director, Eagan High School*



## William Van Epps

Kenyon-Wanamingo High School    Region 1A

G.P.A. 4.18

Band, choir, football, wrestling, baseball.

*“The three ‘A’s’ have been a big part of my success and they have helped me become a leader and role model for my peers as well as the younger students. I hope the example that I have set...will continue to show how important it is to participate in as many activities as possible.”*

**College plans:** To study exercise science and pre-physical therapy at Minnesota State University-Mankato and to play baseball.



## Ella Matzke

Lake City High School    Region 1A

G.P.A. 3.992

Band, choir, volleyball, basketball, golf.

*“I believe that although there are many things we cannot control in life, the smallest act can make a positive influence in a school and community.”*

**College plans:** To pursue a degree in business and marketing at Concordia University, St. Paul and participate in Division II golf.



## Joseph Frundt

Blue Earth Area High School    Region 2A

G.P.A. 4.024

Band, choir, football, basketball, tennis.

*“Academics have helped me develop a strong work ethic, determination and problem solving skills...Athletics have show me that when working as a team you can accomplish great things...The fine arts have shown me to be responsible for my roles and to take pride in the things I do.”*

**College plans:** To study at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and participate in a vocal/choir group.





## Katelin Flack

Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial High School    Region 2A

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, choir, speech, visual arts, cross country, volleyball, basketball, track and field, clay target.

*“Participation in arts and athletics allowed me to become a well-rounded member of my high school community...[It] has given me the gift of friendship by fostering teamwork, respect and integrity.”*

**College plans:** To study in a pre-med program at Gustavus Adolphus College and participate in orchestra, track and field.



## Blake Stephens

Redwood Valley High School    Region 3A

G.P.A. 3.994

Band, robotics, visual arts, football, basketball, track and field.

*“The dedication and determination I have learned in these three [Triple A] categories helps me not only show up, but give all I have. This is not only a benefit for me, but also to those around me.”*

**College plans:** To pursue a degree in aviation at Minnesota State University-Mankato and participate in track as a hurdler.



## Naomi Wallace

Pipstone Area High School    Region 3A

G.P.A. 3.97

Choir, speech, cross country, gymnastics, track and field.

*“I had great team leaders that inspired me to become like them one day. I wanted to be the older student that was kind and encouraging to everyone. My involvement gave me many opportunities to become this kind of leader.”*

**College plans:** To study business marketing at University of Wisconsin-Superior and participate in choir, track and field.



## Justin Kroeze

Avail Academy Region 4A

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, choir, visual arts, soccer, cross country, basketball, track and field.

*"I've tried to be an example to others by giving my best effort and striving to reach personal goals, like a good grade or qualifying for State...As a sports team captain, I've grown in leadership skills, but I've also been able to serve my teammates."*

**College plans:** Undecided, planning to participate in cross country and track in college.



## Lucy Askegaard

Minnehaha Academy Region 4A

G.P.A. 4.07

Choir, orchestra, soccer, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*"My involvement in varsity sports and music organizations, each with a large time commitment, has taught me the time management and focus skills needed...to excel requires sacrifice and creative planning."*

**College plans:** To pursue a biology degree for pre-med, and music degree and participate in track and field, choir, solo voice.



## Morgan Bellefeuille

Swanville High School Region 5A

G.P.A. 3.9881

Band, One Act Play, robotics, football, basketball, track and field, clay target.

*"My involvement in arts, athletics, and academics have contributed to making me a better person...It's from the hard work, time, effort, physical and mental exertion, and the guidance from every coach that helped me be better than I was."*

**College plans:** To major in mechanical engineering with a minor in military science and participate in band.





## Britney Schommer

Pierz High School    Region 5A

G.P.A. 3.9

Band, tennis, basketball, softball, track and field.

*"I have spent countless hours practicing and competing with my teammates. It has taught me what teamwork, determination and hard work really means...[and] has helped me to realize that winning isn't as important as the bonds you make with each other."*

**College plans:** To pursue a degree in pediatric nursing at Bemidji State University and to play Division II tennis.



## Zachary Baumgartner

Bertha-Hewitt High School    Region 6A

G.P.A. 3.9

Band, choir, One Act Play, speech, cross country, football, basketball, track and field.

*"I found myself to be a better leader while doing these activities because I have been in some since 7th grade, so I know the ropes and I can show them to others."*

**College plans:** To pursue a biology degree and participate in cross country, track and field.



## Teagan Stark

Minnewaska Area High School    Region 6A

G.P.A. 4.063

Band, choir, cross country, dance team, track and field.

*"The various involvements that I have shared my time with, have helped shape me into the person I am now. These experiences have created personal growth and a capable individual who will face challenges and opportunities ahead."*

**College plans:** To pursue a 4-year nursing degree at Gustavus Adolphus College or Winona State College and participate in track and field.





## Quinn FierkeLepp

South Ridge High School    Region 7A

G.P.A. 3.913

Band, speech, visual arts, cross country, track and field.

*"I learned that cultivating a growth mindset is essential for development. Failure and critical feedback are necessary parts of the development process in the arts and can be difficult to accept. Growth mindset thinking helps me improve, even if I struggle."*

**College plans:** To study marketing at Concordia University, St. Paul and participate in club sports, choir or band.



## Faith Zganjar

Cherry High School    Region 7A

G.P.A. 3.8

Band, volleyball, basketball, softball.

*"I have always been a hard worker and I have set standards for myself. I have learned that games will be easier if you work harder in practice...Academics has taught me knowledge, preparation and industriousness."*

**College plans:** To earn a degree in kinesiology at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.



## Caiden Swenby

Fertile-Beltrami High School    Region 8A

G.P.A. 3.978

Band, choir, football, basketball, golf.

*"I wish everyone would shoot for excellence no matter what it is for...My involvement in academics has taught me that you need to be efficient when you work, and it has advanced my time management skills..."*

**College plans:** To pursue a degree in exercise science at the University of Minnesota-Crookston and play men's basketball.



## Kaydence Augustine

Marshall County Central High School    Region 8A

G.P.A. 4.241

Band, choir, One Act Play, visual arts, volleyball, basketball, softball.

*“Being a team captain has ignited my leadership skills. I cherish watching my teachers and coaches...to emulate their conduct to be the most effective leader possible.”*

**College plans:** To complete an Associate of Arts degree at Northland Community and Technical College, to study elementary education and early childhood at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, and to participate in choir, volleyball and softball.



## Noah Quigley

Hastings High School    Region 1AA

G.P.A. 3.942

Orchestra, cross country, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*“Athletics has taught me resiliency, taking challenges head-on and pushing myself to new limits...[I am] a person ready to serve and positively influence others.”*

**College plans:** To study biomedical engineering and agricultural science minor, and pursue an ROTC double major at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Also to participate in the Army National Guard Biathlon Team and Army Ten Miler Team.



## Marin Keller

Winona High School    Region 1AA

G.P.A. 4.253

Band, visual arts, volleyball, basketball, golf.

*“...Since the beginning, the communities that have surrounded each and every one of these activities has helped me and my leadership skills tremendously and I know I will be able to use these skills as my life progresses.”*

**College plans:** To study civil engineering at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and to play college golf.





## Kaleb Kim

Mankato East High School    Region 2AA

G.P.A. 4.261

Choir, orchestra, swimming and diving, tennis.

*“My involvement in the arts, athletics and academics has had an indelible impact on my life that, each in their own way, have taught me valuable lessons in time management, goal setting and perseverance.”*

**College plans:** To pursue degrees in finance and psychology at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and participate in choir, orchestra.



## Makayla Haugen

Jordan High School    Region 2AA

G.P.A. 4.087

Band, One Act Play, speech, tennis, basketball, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*“I give 100-percent of my effort the entire time. Some might say I can occasionally care too much but I use my passion to better myself and those around me.”*

**College plans:** To study biology (pre-med) at Iowa State University or the University of Wisconsin-Madison and to participate in band, club sports.



## Jack Kruger

Eagan High School    Region 3AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, speech, football, basketball, track and field.

*“The high school experience...has shown me how important it is to take myself out of my comfort zone—because that is where I have seen my greatest periods of growth. ...The arts have taught me about utilizing emotion and vulnerability to create beauty.”*

**College plans:** To study engineering at North Dakota State University and participate in band, track and field.



## Madeline Ngo

Simley High School    Region 3AA

G.P.A. 3.995

Band, swimming and diving, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*“Having the opportunity to be a captain of the swim and dive team has taught me that leadership is not just about telling others what to do or being in charge. It is about encouraging others, influencing them to give their all and guiding them to success.”*

**College plans:** To pursue a degree in electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and participate in band.



## Ataa-Adjetey Mensah

Roseville Area High School    Region 4AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, orchestra, One Act Play, football, basketball, track and field.

*“I’ve learned to keep a steady mind. To not worry but stay focused on the task at hand and keep working ‘til the job is done. I’ve learned to stay positive. To stay optimistic even when those around me aren’t and things seem impossible. I’ve learned to stay grateful and humble.”*

**College plans:** To study business, engineering or computer science and participate in basketball and jazz music.



## Pria Stauning

St. Paul Central High School    Region 4AA

G.P.A. 4.81

Band, orchestra, cross country, soccer, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*“My participation in the arts, athletics and academics has contributed to how I perceive and overcome an obstacle. I have evolved my mindset to view every challenge as an opportunity to grow.”*

**College plans:** To study clinical psychology and sports medicine.





## Michael James

Osseo High School    Region 5AA

G.P.A. 4.013

Band, visual arts, soccer, tennis.

*“Music has given me a unique understanding and empathy for others. The ability to sit in a room of strangers and create art with other musicians has continued to translate into my normal interactions with people every day where I respect and enjoy people very different from myself.”*

**College plans:** To double major in horn performance and music education and play tennis, soccer.



## Corynn Harvieux

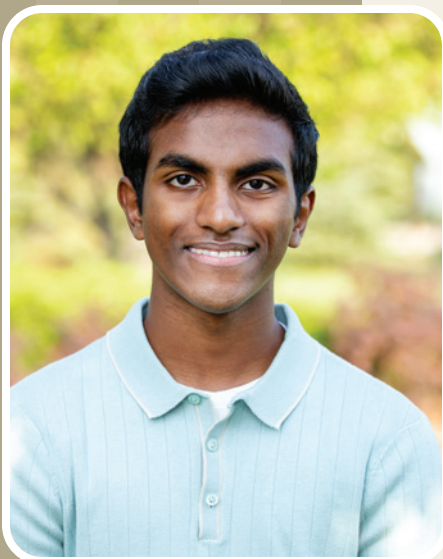
Centennial High School    Region 5AA

G.P.A. 4.181

Band, dance team.

*“...the part that surprised me about this [leadership] role was learning to be a support system for my peers and teammates...I have learned to (and continue to work to) communicate compassion and understanding in ways that each individual teammate needs to hear.”*

**College plans:** To earn a fine arts degree in dance as well as a music minor at Chapman University in Orange, California and play in a wind ensemble.



## Nikhil Andrew

Eden Prairie High School    Region 6AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, speech, tennis.

*“The [tennis] team showed me that the only way in which we would find success was to think of our team as one and not many. From them, I learned...how to adapt to team dynamics, how to celebrate the wins and build from the losses and that no one person is ever to blame.”*

**College plans:** To study computer science at Cornell University.



## Madeline Kaufman

Eden Prairie High School    Region 6AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, gymnastics, track and field.

*“Nothing has taught me to appreciate a challenge like being a lover of learning, gymnast, pole vaulter and musician. By putting me in high-pressure situations, my activities have fostered an ability to gather myself and execute whatever task is at hand...”*

**College plans:** To study anthropology, Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth College and participate in track, band, jazz groups.



## Graham Anderson

Princeton High School    Region 7AA

G.P.A. 4.233

Band, choir, speech, robotics, cross country, swimming and diving, track and field.

*“My involvement in the variety of arts, athletics and academics has exposed me to a wide variety of people. This has taught me to understand many different points of view and even different cultures.”*

**College plans:** To pursue a degree in mechanical engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and participate in jazz band, choir, swimming.



## Rowan Bixler

Duluth East High School    Region 7AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Choir, cross country, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*“As my choral capabilities have evolved, so has my appreciation for working with others towards common goals. Everyone brings their individual personality, perspective and sound that all shape the way we make music. The diversity of our voices creates a song that no single one of us could create alone.”*

**College plans:** To pursue the pre-med program at Amherst College and participate in choir, cross country, track.





## Paul Fasen

Monticello High School    Region 8AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, choir, cross country, swimming and diving, track and field.

*“As a senior, I hope to show the underclassmen the true meaning of servant leadership in my activities. This leadership is one without a title; it is the example I set for my younger peers to follow.”*

**College plans:** To study pre-law with a focus on human rights at the University of Chicago and participate in swimming and choir.



## Jaelyn Miller

Alexandria Area High School    Region 8AA

G.P.A. 4.0

Band, visual arts, cross country, Nordic skiing, track and field.

*“Being the youngest on the [Nordic skiing] team for three consecutive years taught me more about respect, determination and sheer grit than any other experience in my life...Now I can apply everything I learned...to be a leader and captain.”*

**College plans:** To study biochemistry at North Dakota State University and participate in cross country, track and field.

## 2023 Triple “A” Award Winners



Maci Lake  
Sebek



Isaac Kreft  
West Central Area



Ava Lowman  
Cambridge-Isanti



Avery Anderson  
Orono

# Past Triple "A" Award Winners

## 1989

Laura Stone, Canby  
Darren Kraabel, Menahga  
Shannon Monahan, Alexandria  
Jim Hornsten, Chisago Lakes

## 1990

Lori Kocher, Mankato West  
Matthew Kelso, Chaska  
Leanne Amiot, Crookston Central  
Michael Hopper, Westbrook

## 1991

Emilie Hanson, Prior Lake  
Scott Norquist, Forest Lake  
Carrie Redman, Medford  
Andy Werder, Browerville

## 1992

Karrn Gustafson, Cambridge  
Tom Riitters, Little Falls  
Chad Solvie, Hancock  
Jill Wolverton, Fairmont

## 1993

Erin Kolbe, Owatonna  
Ryan Williams, St. Cloud Apollo  
Jill Temple, Osakis  
Jorn Pung, Braham

## 1994

Kristina Kozlovsky, North Branch  
Timothy Walther, Columbia Heights  
Kristin Olson, Glencoe  
Eric Engemann, Glencoe

## 1995

Britig Riley, Columbia Heights  
Randy McLain, St. Francis  
Natasha Hamann, Perham  
Michael Stoick, St. Michael-Albertville

## 1996

Marguerite Thorn, Albert Lea  
Aaron Crowser, Alexandria  
Abby Stritesky, Ogilvie  
Brent Stiles, Lewiston-Altura

## 1997

Amanda Jepson, Monticello  
Eric Anderson, Fairmont  
Christy Boraas, Lac qui Parle Valley  
David Joosten, Balaton

## 1998

Kathryn Eisenmenger, Fairmont  
Todd Ferguson, Alexandria  
Janelle Evenson, Pelican Rapids  
Whitney Kuehl, Westbrook-Walnut Grove

## 1999

Meghan Stritesky, Ogilvie  
Timothy Nelson, Braham  
Sarah Geers, Robbinsdale Cooper  
David Bradley, Rochester Mayo

## 2000

Janie Hanson, Blue Earth Area  
Mark Borgen, Badger  
Lindsay Hartmann, Alexandria  
Scott Ferguson, Alexandria

## 2001

Angela Hummel, Jackson County Central  
Jeremiah Aakre, Underwood  
Amber Swenson, Park Center  
Jonathan Dumm, Alexandria

## 2002

Heather Danckwart, Wabasha-Kellogg  
Ben Aakre, Underwood  
Rebekah Solem, Thief River Falls Lincoln  
Andy Bohnsack, Dassel-Cokato

## 2003

Elisa Ingvalson, Blooming Prairie  
Alex Mohrbacher, Warroad  
Elizabeth Eisenmenger, Fairmont  
Philip Litfin, Waconia

## 2004

Kelsey Aakre, Barnesville  
Matthew Hanson, Dodge Center  
Pamela Chapman, Winona  
Stephen Thorn, Albert Lea

## 2005

Hannah Sieling, Watertown-Mayer  
Chad Karlsson, Rush City  
Amanda Kern, St. Cloud Apollo  
Daniel LaFountaine, St. Cloud Apollo

## 2006

Leah Kay, Dassel-Cokato  
Josef Nevers Tofte, Duluth  
Andrea Millerbernd, Littlefork-Big Falls  
Daniel Murray, Blue Earth

## 2007

Lisa Hilde, Osakis  
Carl Stenoiien, Underwood  
Quentin Dudley, Worthington  
Deborah Barany, Roseville Area

## 2008

Ellen Gustafson, Houston  
Ali Khalili, Byron  
Cecilia Noecker, St. Paul Highland Park  
David Dulak, Red Wing

## 2009

Kaari Jensen, Pierz  
Sam Thielen, Wheaton  
Sarah Bingea, Delano  
Jakob Lindaas, Moorhead

## 2010

Sonja Peterson, Two Harbors  
Peter Wollin, Greenbush-Middle River  
Ellen Degler, Chaska  
Mathew Schnorenberg, Mankato East

## 2011

Ellen Ferry, Underwood  
Logan Spitzack, Triton, Dodge Center  
Julia Harrison, Mound-Westonka  
Andrew Hausmann, Rosemount

## 2012

Katie Ellingworth, Redwood Valley  
D.J. Cline, Battle Lake  
Savannah Wunderlich, Owatonna  
Kirk Busche, Rochester Century



# Past Triple "A" Award Winners

## 2013

Katianne Brockpahler, Sebeka  
Steffan Stroh, Underwood  
Allison Reichl, St. Cloud Apollo  
Ted Deitz, Alexandria

## 2014

Taylor Kraemer, Osakis  
Dillon John, Adrian  
Shaelyn Sorensen, Tartan, Oakdale  
William Dudley, Worthington

## 2015

Heidi Bau, Murray County Central  
Charles Stejskal, Maple Lake  
Maria Leibel, Cambridge-Isanti  
Oliver Wolyniec, Worthington

## 2016

Madison McKeever, Win-E-Mac  
Jack Erickson, Murray County Central  
Maité Marin-Mera, Willmar  
Matthew Majerle, Brainerd

## 2017

Kiera Olson, Fillmore Central  
Carter Peterson, Underwood  
Anja Maijala, Cloquet  
Eric Wilson, Benilde-St. Margaret's

## 2018

Brianna Kreft, West Central Area  
Noah Carlson, Houston  
Allison Prestby, Alexandria Area  
Kevin Cornelius, Orono

## 2019

Cassidy Smith, Tracy Area  
Shan Donovan, Onamia  
Lauren Bastian, Anoka  
Brockdon Lawhead, Austin

## 2020

Kindra Peterson, Underwood  
Christopher Borash, Royalton  
AnnaGrace Nelson, Cambridge-Isanti  
Oliver Paleen, St. Paul Highland Park

## 2021

Kadyn Triebenbach, Osakis  
Preston Rohloff, Hancock  
Allison Benjamin, East Ridge  
Lane Versteeg, Owatonna

## 2022

Grace Moeller, Lake Crystal Wellcome  
Memorial  
Isaac Scherfenberg, Battle Lake  
Kessa Mara, Willmar  
Connor Ginskey, Owatonna

## 2023

Maci Lake, Sebeka  
Isaac Kreft, West Central Area  
Ava Lowman, Cambridge-Isanti  
Avery Anderson, Orono



## Minnesota State High School League *Academics, Arts & Athletics Award*

## *Purpose of the Triple "A" Program*

- To recognize and honor high school seniors who have excelled in the classroom, the arts and athletics.
- To elevate academic standards and create greater awareness of League-sponsored activities and their values.
- To provide member schools of the League with the opportunity to participate in a statewide program that supports, promotes, and recognizes academic and extracurricular achievements.

## *Nomination Criteria*

To be eligible for the Academics, Arts, and Athletics Award students must:

- be a high school senior at the time of nomination. Nominations are limited to two qualifying students per school—one male and one female.
- have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the date of nomination.
- participate in League-sponsored athletic and fine arts activities.
- comply with the MSHSL's Student Code of Conduct.



# Midwest Dairy

*is proud to sponsor the*

## Minnesota State High School League *Academics, Arts & Athletics* Award Program

*Congratulations  
Triple "A" Finalists*





# ACADEMICS, ARTS & ATHLETICS

